

This World Today

Where Was CIA in Israel, Hungary?

CPYRGHT

By Royce Brier

CENTRAL Intelligence Agency (CIA) is an espionage bureau growing from the wartime OSS in 1947.

Its structural organization and its method of operation are not made public. Various congressional committees have been effectively blocked in efforts to investigate it. How much the operation costs the taxpayer annur not known. Its p chief is Allen W. I brother of the Sec. of State.

In general, we know CIA maintains a world-wide intelligence system operating in whole or in part out of foreign embassies. It co-ordinates reports of foreign activity which may interest the State Department. It has a research and analysis division which merges with State procedure, but the details of this are not revealed.

In theory CIA should get wind of any hostile act by a foreign power and relay it to State. In theory, it is the information-gathering and possibly the evaluating body which will learn of intended attack on the United States and give timely warning.

IN ITS INFANCY CIA was charged with failure to discover an incipient revolution in Colombia on the eve of a Pan-American conference at Bogota. It was accused of failure to warn of impending attack of the North Koreans, again failure to learn Red China was about to intervene in the Korean war.

Espionage is, of course, very tricky in the Far East. It should be more effective in the Middle East or in Europe.

For instance, there are very close cultural and economic ties between Israel and the United States. Yet the State Department was caught flat-footed by the Israeli invasion of Egypt. The conclusion is inescapable that CIA did not know what was preparing in Tel Aviv.

A similar conclusion touches the Hungarian uprising. Normally there was a continual flow of nationals between Hungary and Austria, scores crossing the frontier daily on legitimate or shady business. But CIA listening posts in Vienna, let alone Budapest, drew a blank.

Consequently the President and State were again surprised by an immensely significant event developing in Middle Europe.



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SO THE QUESTIONS arise: Is CIA doing a job? Do its undercover agents, particularly behind the Iron Curtain, know what is going on, and if they don't, why don't they? If they don't, can any reliance be placed on CIA to warn us of attack which might mean survival?

We don't take kindly to spying. We have never before maintained a national spy system in peacetime. But the world situation was so threatening after 1945 that we submitted to a spy system, though it was repugnant to us.

Yet the system must justify itself in results if it is to justify its secrecy, if it is to convince the taxpayer he should support a function about which he can know nothing. Let us be fair to CIA. Its secrecy is necessary, and if wholly unmasked the agency's usefulness is destroyed. Moreover, armed services intelligence bodies have been jealous of CIA and have sniped at it, and these bodies looked no better in Korea, Israel or Hungary than CIA did.

Notwithstanding, CIA should explain what has happened in the past few weeks. It may even have to submit to judicious congressional inquiry, or get an injudicious one which would benefit nobody.

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